



Louisiana Black Bear

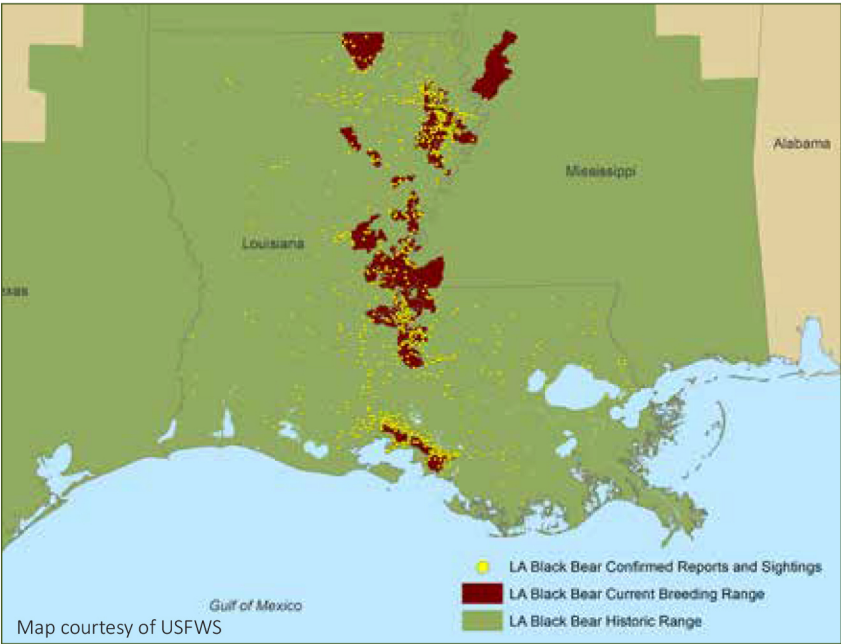
...Louisiana's State Mammal



The Louisiana black bear once ranged throughout Louisiana and parts of Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas. The black bear was common at the time of early colonization, serving as food for both Indians and European settlers. More than 80 percent of prime Louisiana black bear habitat in the Mississippi River floodplain had been lost by the early 1990s primarily due to clearing land for agriculture. Considerable work towards restoring the Louisiana black bear has occurred with multiple state and federal agencies, research universities, and non-governmental organizations playing integral roles in restoring population numbers and habitat of our state mammal.

Currently, Louisiana supports four core bear populations as well as several satellite populations in Louisiana and Mississippi. However, black bears, particularly dispersing males, can be found throughout Louisiana.

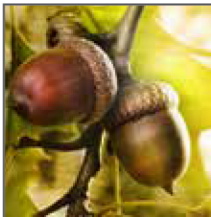
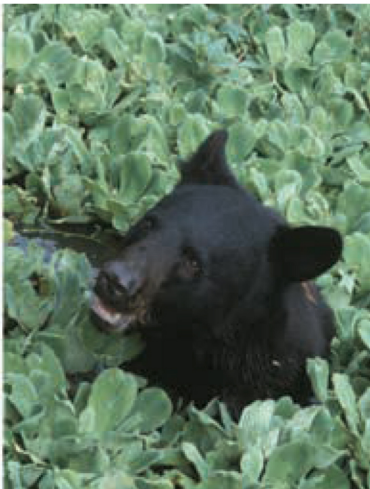
Based on the studies conducted by the University of Tennessee, the current Louisiana bear population is estimated to range between 500 to 750 individuals.



Map courtesy of USFWS



- Average weight of adult males generally ranges between 250-400 pounds; however adult males can weigh more than 500 pounds. Female bears are much smaller with an average weight of 120-200 pounds. Louisiana black bears can be up to 6 feet in length.
- Black bears are good swimmers and can also climb trees. They have a good sense of smell but have poor eyesight.
- Louisiana black bears are not true hibernators; they make day beds, but can remain active all winter.
- Female Louisiana black bears den either in trees or on ground nests made by the females. Cubs are born around the month of February.
- Bear activity revolves primarily around the search for food, water, cover, and mates. Bears are best described as opportunistic omnivorous feeders, as they eat almost anything that is available. Their diet varies seasonally and includes primarily succulent vegetation during spring, fruits and grains in summer, and hard mast (such as acorns and pecans) during fall.



This public document was published at a total cost of \$3,370.49. 1,000 copies of this public document were published in this fourth printing at a cost of \$279.73. This document was published by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA to provide information about the Louisiana black bear. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.